

West Christchurch Residents Association

A summary of the meeting held by Christchurch Borough Council on its Budget for 2011/12 at the end of January 2011 with community representatives is as follows:

Central government settlement grant will be cut by at least 28% by 2015.

The Council's other income has fallen due to low interest rates and local searches being no longer chargeable.

Government grant cut by £370,000 for 2011/12 (a reduction of 16.2% from the previous year) to be followed by a further reduction of £133,000 (6.9%) in 2012/13.

Reductions in later years will be subject to the result of a Local Government Finance review to begin in 2011.

Council Tax for 2011/12 will be at the same amount as 2010/11. A central government grant for four years will support this stability, but the position for 2015/16 could be a problem when the grant ceases.

In the current financial year savings of £99,000 have been made by staff reorganisations. Non-staff savings amount to £79,000 to give a total of £178,000.

The administrative services partnership with East Dorset Council will save £184,000 in 2011/12 through sharing a Chief Executive and other management team posts.

Additional savings of £207,000 will accrue through partnerships in the areas of Revenues and Benefits (with East Dorset and North Dorset Councils) and from the new Dorset countywide waste system.

Christchurch Council faced a £600,000 gap in funding over five years and this sum has been matched by savings from shared administration without affecting front line services.

The changes were driven by the large financial constraints facing all public services in the country. A useful headline that demonstrates the changes that were needed is that the Council's budget for 2010/11 was £6.7M and for 2011/12 it will be £5.8M.

Additional information.

Since the budget meeting knowledge of a useful indicator has been gained. The impact of council funding throughout Britain is affected by the proportion of income from Council Tax as against grants. Councils with a high percentage of grant income will have the greatest difficulty in balancing budgets. In this council area 75% of income is from Council Tax and that amount stays with the collecting authority. This high level gives some protection against the most extreme changes.